17. (New) An automated apparatus for immunological assay, the apparatus comprising means for supporting, guiding, and stepwise displacement of vessels, or of sets of reaction vessels along a path having a predetermined number of positions, means for supporting samples to be analyzed, means for supporting reagents, and means for taking determined quantities of samples and of reagents and for injecting the quantities taken into the reaction vessels, together with means for washing the vessels, means for reading the results, and means for feeding sets of reaction vessels and for ejecting sets of used vessels, the apparatus including means for forming a temporary dark chamber that is proof against external light, said dark chamber having photometric means for measuring the intensity of light and a vessel including walls in the form of a vessel for receiving a sample to be tested, a test reagent, and a substrate coupled with a chemiluminescent substance, and also a filling opening, wherein the walls are proof against any light emitted by the chemiluminescent substance, and the filling opening corresponds to a window for reading the intensity of any light emitted by the reaction mixture formed by the sample to be tested, the reagent, and the substrate, and wherein the filling opening is completely surrounded by a planar rim against which a light-proof shoe is pressed.

18. (New) The apparatus according to claim 17, including an opaque shoe for pressing in light-proof manner around the window of the vessel provided with a central opening for passing light between the vessel and photometric means.

19. (New) The apparatus according to claim 17, including a plate for receiving the washing means and the photometric means.

20. (New) The apparatus according to claim 18, wherein the photometric means include moving equipment for pressing the shoe against the window of the vessel.

21. (New) The apparatus according to claim 17, including a shutter for optically isolating a photoelectric detector and means for measuring electrical values delivered by the photoelectric detector while it is immersed in the dark, the shutter being closed.

22. (New) A reaction vessel for an automatic immunological assay apparatus comprising a plurality of walls defining a chamber and defining a filling opening, said walls being proof against any light emitted by any contents of the chamber, said filling opening providing a window for measuring the intensity of any light emitted by the contents of the chamber, and said filling opening being entirely surrounded by a rectangular planar rim against which a light-proof shoe is pressable.

23. (New) A method for performing immunological assays that detects light emitted by a reaction mixture consisting of a sample, a reagent and a chemiluminescent substance, said method comprising:

combining a sample and a reagent in a chamber of a reaction vessel having a filling opening;

adding a chemiluminescent substance to the chamber;

pressing a detector against the filling opening;

measuring the light emitted from the chamber when the detector is pressed against the filling opening to provide a first reading;

illuminating a light source external to the chamber;

measuring the light emitted from the chamber with the light source illuminated to provide a second reading; and

comparing the first reading and the second reading to determine the light-tightness of the chamber.

REMARKS

Claims 6-11 and 15 have been determined to be allowable. Claims 16-23 have been added. Examination and consideration of the newly added claims in view of the following remarks are requested.

CLAIM REJECTIONS – 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

In the Office Action dated January 23, 2002, Claims 1 and 5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Uzan et al. (US Pat. 5,849,247) in view of Berthold et al. (US Pat. 5,048,957), Smethers et al. (US Pat. 5,643,535), and Honzawa et al. (US Pat. 5,637,874).